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# SERVICE

## USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

U. S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE  
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · OFFICE OF INFORMATION · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

September 1966

No. 33

### SHOPPING TIPS

### CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

Pick the Plentifuls. It pays to keep one eye cocked on the calendar when you shop for groceries. By choosing foods in season, you get the top of the crop plus a bargain in good flavor and nutrition. In September, the U. S. Department of Agriculture says consumers should look for lots of grapes, potatoes and pears, turkeys and peanuts. In October: apples, grapes, pears, rice, dry beans, broiler-fryers and pork.

Half a Ham. To get the most for your money when buying a ham, buy it either whole or by the half. That way you know you'll get those meaty center slices. According to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, a "ham half" must be exactly that. A piece of ham labeled butt or shank "end" or "portion" means the butcher has removed the center slices (and probably sold them separately for more money).

Pennies Do Count. A few cents, saved here and there at the grocery store, can cut your weekly food bill anywhere from 10 to 15 percent, USDA food economists find. Try it and see. Take breads and cereals as a starter. As you shop, remember: Bread is less expensive than rolls. Day-old bread, if available, is even cheaper. Hot cereals cost less than ready-to-eat varieties; unsweetened cereals less than sugared. Whole grain, enriched or fortified cereal products usually are less expensive (and more wholesome) than fancy crackers and special breads. Figure the cost and then decide which is for your family.

Figure it Faithfully. Stop before you scream about your food bill. Chances are you've got a lot of other things besides food in your shopping cart. According to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, one-fifth of the money spent at grocery stores goes for non-food items--things like soap, paper goods, pet foods, clothing, cosmetics, cigarettes, and alcoholic beverages.

Pleats to Grow On. When you shop for children's clothes this fall and winter, shop for clothes that will grow with the child, say clothing specialists at the U. S. Department of Agriculture. For little girls, buy dresses that are gathered, pleated or circular, dresses without belts or definite waistlines and with big hems and seams, roomy armholes and short sleeves without cuffs or bands.



## WHAT'S NEW

Always in Season. Mushrooms on the shelf 9 months old. Not fresh, of course, but a new dehydrated mushroom powder developed by U. S. Department of Agriculture scientists at the Eastern utilization research laboratory in Philadelphia. Although not yet produced commercially, this new product should rival both imported dehydrated mushrooms and domestic freeze-dried mushrooms. It can be stored as long as 9 months on the kitchen shelf without loss of flavor. And it tastes as well as it keeps. A panel of tasters rated the product high in quality--good as a seasoning and as an ingredient in soups, sauces and gravies. And it's so easy to use. Just add liquid and watch it mushroom.

New Wall Paneling. From crooked, gnarled oaks has come a strikingly beautiful wood for wall paneling. The result of U. S. Department of Agriculture research, this new type of paneling makes use of what formerly were considered useless trees of the Appalachian area. Two new processing steps have made it possible: (1) a method of quickly seasoning green wood which produces--as a bonus--a new coloration similar to chestnut or walnut, and (2) a system of sizes that simplifies installation, lowers in-place costs, and makes possible truly randomized installation of paneling pieces of different sizes.

## OFF THE PRESS

Growing Flowering Perennials. Now's the time to start next year's perennials--in flats, potting strips or peat pots. You can keep them outdoors all winter, then replant come spring. Fall, too, is the time to remove dead foliage and stems from those perennials already growing in your garden. How-to-do-it tips on "Growing Flowering Perennials" appear in a new booklet by that name recently published by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The 22-page booklet tells how to plan your garden, prepare the soil, select the perennials and keep them growing. Single copies of HG-114, "Growing Flowering Perennials," are available free from the Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250. When ordering, be sure to include your zip code.

## CLUB PROJECTS

Litter Blitz. All that glitters may not be gold--especially if you find it along a country roadside. More than likely, it's a discarded beer can or pop bottle. Civic-minded organizations looking for a project should give serious thought to a highway clean-up campaign. Such a project is not, however, a one-club job. It takes a cooperative effort--of many willing workers. In Yakima County, Washington, for example, the local 4-H club conducted a march on trash. Before it was done, more than 1,000 youths and nearly 500 adults took part. Over 200 truckloads of trash were picked up along country roads and highways.

Cooperative Month. Dinner is served. And from coast to coast the full menu can be chosen from products of farmer cooperatives. Do it one day this October--in observance of Cooperative Month. Your club could, for example, serve a luncheon featuring broiler chicken with lemon, almond rice, buttered carrots, avocado salad, rolls and honey, and apple pie--all prepared with well-known cooperative brands. There are about 8,900 farmer cooperatives in the United States. In addition to those cooperatives which provide and process food, there are 1,155 rural electric and telephone cooperatives financed by loans from the U. S. Department of Agriculture. More than 5-1/2 million families receive phone and electric service through these cooperatives.



## 20 YEARS OF SCHOOL LUNCH

Can You Spare a Dime? A good lunch for a dime? Not as impossible as you might think. Needy children, who can't afford to pay more for their noonday meal at school, are getting a good nutritious meal for a dime, a nickel, sometimes for free. It comes to them through the National School Lunch Program, which this year celebrates its 20th anniversary. Last year, the average price of a lunch was 28 cents. But whatever the charge, the lunch is the same--a well-balanced meal designed to fill a third of the child's daily nutritive needs. The School Lunch Program, which uses not only Federal funds but USDA-donated foods, is one of today's biggest bargains in good eating. See that your child takes advantage of it.

How to Celebrate. There are many ways a community or a women's club group can help celebrate National School Lunch Week, which this year runs October 9 through 15. One of the best ways is to invite parents for lunch--so they can see for themselves the foods their children get at school. If your community doesn't already do this, here's a good project for your club. Talk to the principal and school lunch manager. They'll appreciate your interest and cooperation. Then handle the publicity for them. Prepare news releases for local newspapers, reproduce a few of the favorite school lunch recipes for use in a food-page feature or as a leaflet that could be distributed at PTA meetings.

Getting Started. If your school doesn't already serve school lunches, why not get a lunch program underway? Often times, school officials lack only local support to get started. Your club could stimulate that support through study programs and a hard-hitting publicity campaign. To help cut costs, volunteer workers can help prepare the lunches. To buy kitchen equipment, your club could stage a carnival, bake and rummage sales. Explain what you're doing and how it can be done. Today, roughly 40,000 schools who could take part in the National School Lunch Program don't--most because they lack facilities and resources.

School Lunch Slide Set. To help you get a school lunch program started--and to point up the many why's and wherefore's--write for "It Happens Every Noon," a 15-minute slide presentation prepared by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Included are 50 colored slides and a narrative script explaining both how to start a school lunch program and how to encourage more youngsters to participate. The slide set may be ordered from the Photography Division, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250, for \$5.50. Or, you can get "It Happens Every Noon" as a filmstrip from Photo Lab Inc., 3825 Georgia Ave. N.W., Washington, D. C. 20011. The cost of the filmstrip is \$5.

Lunch Program in Action. A new 13-minute movie--by the same name as the slide set and filmstrip--also can help you explain the benefits of the National School Program to various groups in your community. The film shows how the lunch program operates in all kinds of schools--old city schools, modern suburban schools, isolated rural schools. To find out about borrowing or buying a copy of the film, "It Happens Every Noon," contact the Motion Picture Service, Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250.

History of the Program. The School Lunch Program and how it grew--that's the story told by the U. S. Department of Agriculture in "Lunch at School," a new booklet that wraps 20 years of progress into 16 pages of easy-to-read, illustrated copy. The publication (PA-764) discusses the program, the lunch, the challenge. Single copies are available from the Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250. There is no charge.

## PROGRAM AID

Free Speaker. Want to know more about buying meats? Then get some advice from an expert. Sandra Brookover, consumer meat specialist of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, is ready and willing to speak before your organization. She can tell you how to use USDA grades as an aid in buying and as a guide in cooking meats. She can give you money-saving tips--such as how to cut the tender part of a Choice grade blade chuck and broil it for a juicy, flavorful steak. To get Miss Brookover as a speaker for your organization--or on radio or television--write to the Editor, SERVICE, Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250.

## GROWING THINGS

Where Do You Live? It makes a difference--when you fertilize your lawn. According to U. S. Department of Agriculture turf experts, geography tells the time. In cool climates, that is the north-middle part of the country, fall is the best time to fertilize--early September through early October. In the northern-most part of the country--late August and early September. This can be followed in the spring with a light application of fertilizer as soon as you can get on the grass and it's not boggy. In the southern half of the country, where lots of bermuda and zoysia grass is grown, lawns can be fertilized in the spring and throughout the summer.

Want to Trifle with Truffles? If you're the adventuresome sort--and are willing to wait 6 to 10 years for your first crop to come in--try truffle growing. You won't have any competition--at least in this country. Oak seedlings, presumably growing in association with the truffle fungus, are available from several French firms. With these, a little land and a pig with a gourmet smeller, you're in business. While the truffles are developing, you can train the pig to smell them out. Truffles grow 2 to 8 inches below the ground.

## HOUSE OR HOME

To Own or Rent. Thinking of buying a new home? You've probably thought of all the reasons why you should. But have you considered the disadvantages, the things that might make homeownership not for you? The U. S. Department of Agriculture lists the pros and cons in Consumers All, its 1965 yearbook. Among the drawbacks you should consider are these. (1) Owning a home requires time and money for upkeep. (2) Property values may go down. (3) The family that owns becomes less mobile than the one who rents. On the other hand, if you rent, you don't have to worry about what might come next door--undesirable neighbors, a filling station. You can always move. (4) Your living requirements change--first you have small children, then teenagers, then none at all at home. The same house probably isn't suitable for all situations. If you rent, you can change as your situation changes.

No Fences to Mend. To protect wooden fencing from termites and decay, the U. S. Department of Agriculture suggests you treat it with a pentachlorophenol preservative. Use a 5% solution in an oil base. Paint the mixture liberally on small boards. Stand fence posts for several days in a 50-gallon drum containing the solution. After treatment, the oil evaporates and the penta remains in solid form in the cells in the wood. Your fence can last 30 to 40 years.

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SERVICE is a monthly newsletter of consumer interest. It is designed for those who report to the individual consumer rather than for mass distribution. For information about items in this issue, write: Jeanne S. Park, Editor, SERVICE, Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250.